



# Organizing for Family Involvement

## Why go this route?

- Because family and community involvement is required under the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the state's Accreditation System.
- Because Title I schools have been required to co-create a compact with their family community.
- Because parents and guardians are essential partners in the education of our students. If they are not included in school planning and communication, they cannot be expected to understand and support the school's reform efforts.
- "The schools that have succeeded against the odds have a shared ingredient: strong involvement with parents and communities. Why? Because students whose parents are involved are more likely to succeed, and schools with parents and community collaborations create cultures of success that attract additional investment."

—Mediratta and Fruchter. *From Governance to Accountability: Building Relationships that Make Schools Work*. 2003.

## You'll know you've arrived when...

- Families are visible in the school, and their support is verifiable through increased attendance at parent-teacher conferences, open houses, school programs and as volunteers.
- Student attendance goes up and the number of tardy students decreases.
- Teachers increase and document the number of positive contacts with parents/guardians.
- Parents increase the number of positive contacts with teachers and the office (calls to check on student progress, report illness, request assistance, report positive incidents).

## Construction Zone

There must be a commitment to communicating with families. You can't go half-way. Once you start, there is no turning back. We recommend it, though it's sometimes challenging.

Family involvement must go beyond fund-raising and potlucks. This packet suggests ways to offer support and instruction to parents so they understand what the school and their children need.

We cannot simply continue to tell them (or worse, critique them). We need to show parents from all social and economic backgrounds how to help their children develop literacy, learning skills and appropriate school behavior.

## It's about TIME


- Set aside time to meet regular deadlines for scheduled newsletter issues.
- Include time for office staff, instructional aides or volunteers to copy, collate and count newsletter copies.

## Potential COSTS

- Costs will depend on the size of the school. The parent group might assume responsibility for financial costs or for doing the clerical work of newsletter production.

## The Process

*A step-by-step guide to  
organizing opportunities  
to communicate with  
and involve families  
in their school.*

**NOTE:** Steps marked with a   
are accompanied by one or more  
inserts, included in this packet.

**1 Identify which elements** of a comprehensive communication plan are already in place:

- A. Parent Handbook *See Process 1 of 6*
- B. Ways to share the school's on-going story (newsletters, brochures, surveys, positive calls, etc.) *See Process 2 of 6*
- C. Well-attended parent conferences *See Process 3 of 6*
- D. A systematic volunteer system *See Process 4 of 6*
- E. School-Parent-Student Compact *See Process 5 of 6*
- F. Parent Involvement Evaluation *See Process 6 of 6*

**2 Work on one element that you don't have**—probably in a-b-c-d order. Choose just one at a time.

**We've included four separate sub-processes in the packet, one for each of the elements listed above. Work on one at a time until you're confident it's solidly in place, making reference to the inserts and samples relevant to each step.**

**3 Ensure on-going maintenance** of your new system by setting aside time. See MI-Map Packet 1:5 "Organizing the School Year" for a calendar system that "tickle files" tasks so you can schedule them on your weekly "to do" list.

**4 Consider moving on** to the next element above.

## Getting more mileage from increasing family involvement

*How organizing opportunities for communication with and involvement of parents/family benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:*

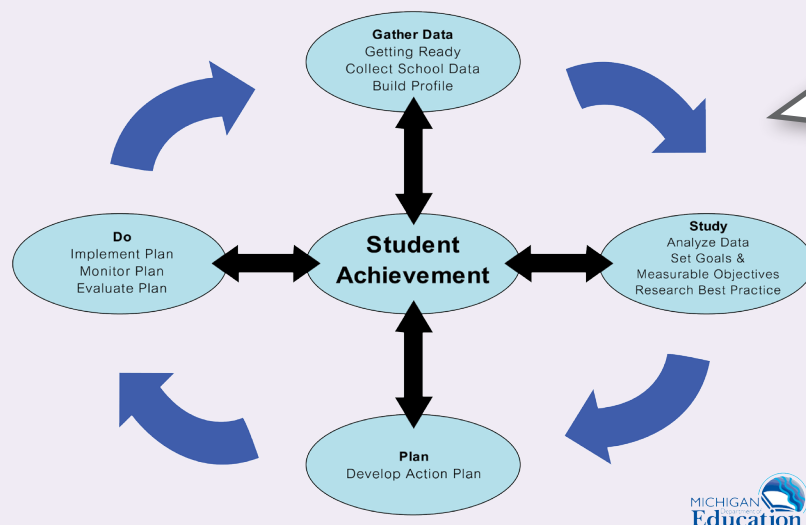
### Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- ESEA requires parental/family involvement in the writing of reform plans, in developing a school-parent compact, in identifying how parents/families will be responsible to support their children's learning and in participating with decision-making about their children's education.

### State Accreditation System

- Schools are required to report explicitly on their efforts to involve and engage parents/families in the educational activities of the school. Steps such as those outlined in this packet will contribute directly to that reportable activity.

### Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process (Mi-CSI) Michigan School Improvement Framework



Parents/families are key stakeholders in the school improvement process. Engaging them in school processes and activities will help them understand and support the school's reform efforts.



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## Resources

### Books, Articles, Websites

#### ***Parent/Family Engagement Information and Tools:***

#### ***Moving Beyond Parent Involvement to Parent Engagement***

#### **Michigan Department of Education. 2004.**

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Parent\\_Involvement\\_Part\\_1\\_12-16-04\\_111426\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Parent_Involvement_Part_1_12-16-04_111426_7.pdf)

#### **“Increasing Parental Involvement: A Key to Student Achievement”**

[http://www.mcrel.org/pdf/noteworthy/learners\\_learning\\_schooling/danj.asp](http://www.mcrel.org/pdf/noteworthy/learners_learning_schooling/danj.asp)

#### **Parent Involvement Matters**

<http://www.parentinvolvementmatters.org/>

### People

Intermediate School Districts/RESAs can serve as a resource.

#### **For more information, contact:**

Michigan Department of Education

Office of Education Improvement and Innovation  
517-241-3147

School Improvement Unit  
517-373-8480

Curriculum and Instruction Unit  
517-241-4285

Office of Assessment and Accountability  
517-373-0048

Office of Early Childhood and Family Services  
517-241-3592

Office of Field Services  
517-373-3921

Office of Professional Preparation and Teacher Certification  
517-373-6505

Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services  
517-373-9433

### Associations

National Association of Elementary School Principals  
<http://www.naesp.org>

National Association of Secondary School Principals  
<http://www.nassp.org>

Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development  
<http://www.ascd.org>

Parent Teacher Association  
<http://www.pta.org>

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